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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Domestic Use of Electricity in Riga

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1. During the winter from November 1951 to February 1952, electric current was often cut off in parts of Riga and Riga Strand to save electricity. The cuts usually took place for three nights running, and the area affected in Riga was about one km square, after which the current was restored and cuts were made in another part of the town. The cuts applied only to domestic users; the streetcar and trolley bus services continued to operate.
2. In Riga, the use of electric heaters is prohibited; if a heater is found in use by an inspector of the electricity authority, there is a fine up to 1,000 Rs. The owner of a heater may even be fined if it is discovered in his room and not actually in use. Despite this regulation, electric heaters are sold openly in shops and people use them, but when the door bell rings they immediately switch off the heater and hide it because the caller might be the electricity inspector coming to read the meter. Meter readings take place at one or two-month intervals, and the inspectors look around for signs of damage to the wiring, as well as for electric heaters.
3. The electricity of an apartment may be cut off if an inspector is not admitted after leaving a notice that he will call at a certain time, or if the tenant does not leave the meter reading pinned to the door. Frequent calls from the inspectors can be avoided in this way, but they must be admitted at least once in six months.
4. There is a fixed quota for consumption for summer and for winter. By not admitting the inspector and pinning a notice to the door with a higher meter reading, it is possible to save a little of the summer quota for the autumn and winter.
5. There are various rules concerning the amount of electricity the domestic consumer may use and the strength of light bulbs, but most people take little notice of these regulations. If one should be found out and prosecution is threatened, there is always the possibility of bribing the inspector.

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